

This legislation is very clear and simple: that no company should be allowed to put their profits before our national security.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

APPROVING THE RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 66, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of a joint resolution (H.J. Res. 66) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise to speak about the need to have a disaster assistance effort to support those in New York, your State, as well as across the country and the tremendous needs we have as a result of what has happened regarding the weather. This year we have seen a terrible string of natural disasters that have shut down businesses, farms, and left families homeless all across our country. As chair of the Agriculture Committee, I am particularly focused, of course, on what has happened to our farmers in America.

I am concerned about the flooding along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, the record droughts that have devastated the livelihoods of men and women who grow our food all across America. Earlier this year we had the worst drought in recorded history in Oklahoma, with about \$1.6 billion in crop losses. In Kansas I have had the opportunity, and my staff has, to join with my ranking member, my colleague, Senator ROBERTS, to talk with folks and a chance to see that the drought had wiped out about \$2 billion in crops.

Floods in the Mississippi River Valley washed over 3 million acres—3 million acres—of farmland. Hurricane Irene destroyed more than 450,000 acres of cotton and 300,000 acres of corn in North Carolina. In New York we have

seen similar damage to corn, soybeans, alfalfa, fruits, and vegetables. In Vermont crop losses are estimated at more than \$5 million.

All across our country we have serious challenges that are creating hardships for our businesses, our farmers, and our families. We need to respond. That is our responsibility. Right now the droughts are worse in Texas where the damage is also in the billions of dollars. We have more than 1,000 homes that have been lost.

Already this year there have been natural disasters in 48 of our States—48 out of 50 States have had natural disasters. Michigan, thank goodness, is one of the two States that has not been affected by the weather. But throughout our Nation's history when men and women in one part of the country were hit with a natural disaster, all of America came together to support them and to help rebuild.

That is what this effort is about, coming together as Americans. That is who we are as Americans. We stand with each other in times of trouble. This is not the time to play politics, not when hundreds of thousands of families, farmers, and businesses have been devastated by an unprecedented string of floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural disasters.

Already, FEMA has had to halt rebuilding efforts in 41 States. So it is critical that we get this done. This legislation in front of us needs to pass, and it needs to pass quickly.

But I also want to tell you about another emergency that has taken place in my State and in too many other States. It is called a jobs emergency. We may not have been affected by the natural disasters of the weather, but as we look over the last decade in a global economy, as the economy has changed we have been through the same kind of devastation—over a longer period of time, but our people are affected as much as any other State disaster.

We have 14 million people out of work in this country—14 million people out of work. We have a huge national deficit. We will never get out of debt with more than 14 million people out of work. We have to make smart decisions on cutting what is not important, and we have to grow. We have to create jobs for people and support the efforts of the private sector to create jobs.

For each and every one of those families, their job search is an emergency. It is an emergency every time they think about how to put food on their table. It is an emergency every month when they have to scrape together money for the rent or the mortgage. It is an emergency every minute of every day when those men and women are filling out applications, going to job fairs, trying their best to get back to work.

So I find in the middle of all of this, in the middle of support for all that is going on around the country in terms of natural disasters, it is extremely concerning—and in fact outrageous to

me—that the House Republicans have proposed a job-killing offset to pay for the help that is critically needed for natural disasters; that would pull the rug out from under businesses and families all across our country and put up to 50,000 American jobs at risk. That is what they are proposing.

I absolutely oppose this. They propose paying for this critical disaster bill by taking dollars out of a very successful advanced manufacturing retooling program that we passed in the 2007 Energy bill—and it took a while to get it up and going. The previous administration never administered it. I thank the Obama administration for coming in in 2009 and beginning the process of putting it together and all of the rules it took, and so on. So it took a while to get up and going. It has not moved as fast as I would like at all. But, thank goodness, the Obama administration saw it as a priority and has moved forward to put it in place.

So what has happened already? Well, these retooling loans have meant 41,000 jobs in Tennessee, California, Indiana, Michigan, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, and Missouri. These retooling loans have helped companies retool older manufacturing plants to build the products of the future in America rather than shipping those jobs overseas. It has been extremely successful.

In Michigan retooling loans made it possible for Ford Motor Company to save 1,900 jobs at the Michigan assembly plant in the city of Wayne so they could build the all new Ford Focus and the battery-electric Focus in America. In the process of that, as we partnered with them on battery funding as well—in the process of that, with the help of these retooling loans they are bringing jobs back from Mexico to support the work they are doing on the new vehicles.

I do not know how many economic development efforts we can stand on the Senate floor today and talk about in the Senate or House that are actually bringing jobs back from overseas. This is the program that the House Republicans want to cut. This loan—and it is a loan, so it has to be repaid—is allowing them to be able to have lower costs to be able to do the retooling on those older plants, to be able to make these new high-tech vehicles.

As I said, in the case of the Ford Motor Company, they have saved 1,900 jobs and are bringing jobs back from Mexico. Another Michigan company, Severstal North America, was able to secure a retooling loan to retool an old steel mill, the Rouge steel mill in Michigan, into a cutting-edge plant building advanced, high-strength steel for automotive production.

Jobs here. That does not count what is happening in States across America. That loan, along with private loans and a billion-dollar investment from the company, will help create over 2,500 constructive jobs and will bring the total number of permanent manufacturing jobs at that plant, again, to